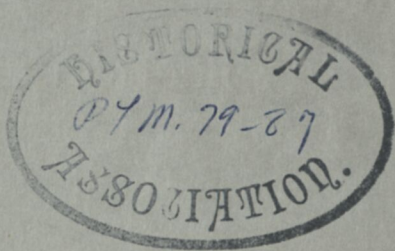


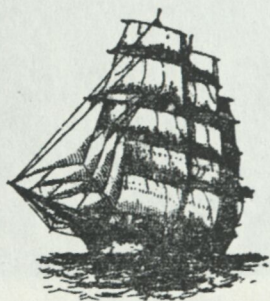
Nantucket
Reflections



Josephine Smith Brooks

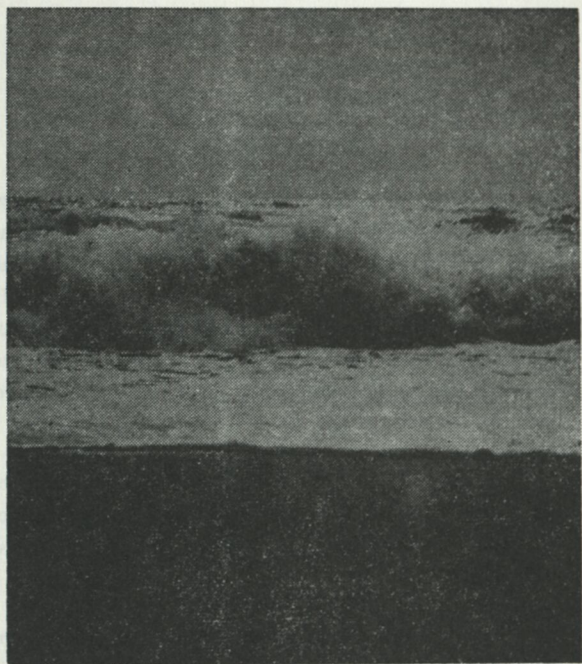


Nantucket Reflections



Josephine Smith Brooks

Published September, 1967



Madaket Surf

Printed in memory of mother,
Josephine Smith Brooks

FOREWORD

I have gathered together some poems written on and about Nantucket by my mother — Josephine Smith Brooks — who has been gone many years, but who is in the hearts of many still on the Island. My parents were both born on the Island and my mother was a teacher in the school at Tuckernuck — also at 'Sconset, before her marriage. She was always interested in helping people in any way she could.

She was Secretary of the School Committee for some years, also a member of the State Board of Charity, representing Nantucket at the State House in Boston.

I thought the poems would be enjoyed by many who cared to read them and I hope they will treasure them as I do.

Gratefully yours,

Mildred Howland Brooks

WHEN I COME TO THE END OF THE ROAD

The path is so narrow and rough, Dear Lord,
With thorns all its sides are bestrewn;
The stones are so sharp to my feet, Dear Lord,
The tangles so deeply o'ergrown,
I falter and stumble and nearly fall,
I feel that so heavy my load;
Yet think what awaits me at Thy dear Call
When I come to the end of the road.

The way is so rocky and dark, Dear Lord,
With sorrows and trials so great,
I fain would grope closer to Thee, Dear Lord,
For Thy hand that'll guide me so straight.
Then mists will lighten, the clouds pass away;
The weight will roll off from my load;
There will await me life, true, lasting day,
When I come to the end of the road.

One sunny path beckoned brightly to me —
All flower-strewn, and broad, ever-gay;
But I longed to follow Thy foot-path, Lord
That ended in glorious day.
I prayed for Thy guidance, and Thou, Dear Lord,
With Thy hand didst lighten my load;
And I looked, and lo! There was light beyond
When I came to the end of the road.

When I come to the end of the road, Dear Lord,
There'll be loved ones awaiting me there,
That I've missed and yearned for many a day,
As they wait in Thy garden so fair.
Then will they welcome me, lovingly, sweet,
And will lead me through green, flowery paths,
My sorrows and pain will fall at my feet,
For I'll be home — At the end of the road.

THE NIGHT HAS GONE

There's peace out there on greening hill — all's still
The night of War has gone from Flanders hill;
Where sleep our boys.

The birds sing sweetly in the dawn so fair;
The fields blush red with poppies' flare, out there
Where dwell our brave;

They lovingly cover the mounded turf,
They rise again from blood-soaked earth, like new
birth
Of our heroes' souls.

No cannon's boom is there to sound alarm;
All's calm, no shell to burst with death or harm,
Calm, like our boys' rest.

They are not dead, these heroes strong and brave,
They sleep. Their sacrifice outlines the grave.
Rest well, dear boys.

SOUVENIR

A murmuring surf on a silent shore,
A brown-green moor where colors pour,
A sky of blue, white drifts of cloud,
The distant view of fair blue sea,
The cry of gulls, a shrilling loud,
Intense deep yearning over me.
The sky, the moor, the sea, the shore
All speak His hand forevermore.

VOICES

I know a little woodsy hill,
A little greening quiet hill
Where loved ones gathered —
Loved ones now forever still —
Yet in the sound of bird and bee,
In softly whispering winds of lea,
Those voices long since lost awhile
come back to me.

THE MESSENGER

It was only a wilted flower
From the roadside near the farm,
But it softened the heart
And it made the tear start,
While it saved a soul from harm.

It brought a gleam of Mother,
And her spirit hovered near;
And a love gently flowed,
And a tenderness glowed,
And it eased a breast from fear.

A lone weary man grew stronger
For the battle of the day;
And a slow step lightened,
And a dull eye brightened,
With a valiant love's clear ray.

PROTECTION

Savior, let me lean on Thee;
Trust Thy sheltering arm;
May Thy presence, ever near,
Keep me from all harm.

Dark the skies, and black the night;
Be Thou ever near.
Guard me with Thy power and might,
Keep me safe from fear.

There are torrents to be crossed,
If it be Thy will.
Dark the waves and tempest-tossed,
Stay Thou with me still.

What are torrents dark and deep,
If Thou be my guide?
Thou Thy child will surely keep
Safely at Thy side.

May I ever feel Thee nigh,
Through all strife and gloom —
May I at last so die
That I reach my home.

DAWN

I love the sky at break of dawn,
I love the calm blue sea,
I love the golden sands of shore,
The winds across the lea.

I love the dark cold face of rocks,
With ocean's white spray bathed,
I love the cry of soaring gull
With wings of sunshine laved.

The sky, the rocks, the sand, the gull,
All speak of love, of life,
Of things eternal, blissful,
Of peace, of ending strife.

THE CALM

Here lies the blissful peace, the calm of yesterday.
 Sky, and sea, and bird seemed a prayer of mild
 content;
As when a child at mother's side kneels down to
 pray,
And feels that here is peace and blessings Heaven-
 sent.

BY THE SEA

(A Storm at Tuckernuck)

The wind-waved russet grass
Curves shoreward to the sea;
Harsh cries the silvering gull
On rushing foam so free.
Dashes a restless surf,
Whitedged on yellow sand —
A symphony of glee
Played by Old Neptune's hand.

Brown hills outlining round
On the purple of the cloud,
And sand dunes, waved by wind
And sea, withstand the loud,
Angry rush of billow.
Like phantom ship's grim breath —
Weird messengers of fate —
Is the mad white line of death

Roughly leaping near the sky
That joins the ocean's breast.
Racing rips smoke landward,
Which beaches steep arrest.
Huge and heavy storm-cloud —
Chilled from Northern land,
Black with winds of Winter's
Fiercely threatening hand —

All boldly rush away;
While sail nor craft come nigh
Where ocean, thundering long,
Her smoking crests rear high,
Like horse of war so bold.
The fierce and cruel sea,
So fiendish and so grim,
Has all monopoly.

TWILIGHT HARBOR

Faint in the West glows the purple-gold twilight,
While the bar bell swings out with the tide,
As the North Wind roughens the waves where the
 sunlight

Lately played 'ere the daylight had died.

The sombre old town rises dark 'gainst the sky,
And its houses and towers are grey,
Like castles and turrets of time long gone by,
With a background of far away day.

The home-coming boats glide in at the dusk hour,
Like dim spectres, airily light,
And rounding Brant Point, the sea nymphs' fair bower,
Near the shore that is silent and white.

Coatue's quiet shore near the low rounding land
Curves a harbor that's safe, still, and true;
Secure from all strife, and from tempests' command
Is its deep, peaceful bosom of blue.

It flows near the edge of the salt marshy shores,
Whose strong breath is borne out far and wide;
From Monomoy's beach on the night air there pours
The scent of wild flowers, as we glide.

Oh! the joy, and the peace, sky, water, and land,
And the sweet-scented air over all;
While out of the town the pale lights twinkle bland,
As so gently descends the night's pall.

And a peace, and a hush fall soft on the soul,
As we silently row in the gloam,
For now we are nearing the sweet restful goal
Of our homeland — our dear island home.

And at last when we come to the harbor above,
To the home of bliss, peace and calm rest,
We will know, we will feel the true depth of His
 love,

That whatever He gives is the best.

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NANTUCKET COMMONS

Commons of green starlit with daisies white;
Where overhead birds dart with shrilling cry.
A hush of calm is over all around.
The pines point darkening on the western sky,
They keep stern guard o'er green-grassed rutted roads.
The sun's unshaded brilliance glares on flower and blade;
And over all the hush lies The Great Peace.
Blue Iris nods o'er deepening green of swamp;
Bayberry's pearls of gray pour forth spiced sweetness;
Wild roses strew leaves of scented blessings
Showered on weary souls that long for comfort, rest.
Sauls Hills stand out in silence majestic,
Ages old, enduring, everlasting;
They loom like some great warriors in gray
Guarding the moors below, where hold sway sweet fern,
Arnica with its yellow blooming stars;
Lace flowers of wild carrot blow and bend, like fleece;
Red lilies lend color to the sage green grass.

Beyond, the bay ripples with fleeting hues,
Where lazily swinging boats wait, and tempt.
The voice of waves comes loitering to the land;
And cry of inland-voyaging gull startles
The silence of the moors' sweet solitude.
The distant sea-cliffs, pale-looming in the sun's fierce rays,
Rise, scarred by winter wind-tossed waves and rains;
The grey-green slopes lift fronts to the sun's bright glow.
Against the sky far-off spires etch darkly sharp.
The isle's veil of bloom, its zephyrs, and its gales —
When moorland grass curves shoreward to the sea —
Speak to the heart of sweet content, repose.
Dear Isle, whose children's names are known in every
clime,
From whence sweet spices, gifts of Orient splendor, came,
Brought by captains of the sea from many a land,
Thou art the haven of rest, where fully lies
The true, great-hearted love of Nature's God.

NANTUCKET ISLAND

With moors of green, starlit with daisies white —
Where overhead birds dart with shrilling cry,
A hush of calm is all around.
The pines are darkening on the Western sky
And keep strict guard over green-grassed rutted roads —
The sun's unshaded brilliance glares on flower and blade
Over all the hush — like the Great Peace.
Blue iris bends o'er deepening green of swamp —
Bayberry's pearls of gray pour forth spiced sweetness,
Wild roses scatter leaves of spice-like blessings
Showered on weary souls — that long for comfort, rest.
Beyond, the harbor ripples with fleeting hues;
Where lazily swinging boats wait and tempt.
The voice of waves comes loitering to the land,
And cry of inland-voyaging gull startles the silence
Of the moor's sweet solitude.
The distant sea cliffs — pale looming in the sun's
fierce rays —
Rise — scarred by winter winds — tossed waves and rain.
The bronze-green slopes lift fronts to the sun's bright
glow —
Against the sky spires are darkly sharp.
Isle's veil of bloom —
Thou art the haven of peace where fully lies
The true great-hearted love of Nature's God.

AT EVENTIDE

The livelong day the spear-points of sunshine
Gleam far and wide across the deep green lawn.
They peep in at the long casement window,
Wafting cheer, golden light to all inside.
Now, near eventide the early starlight
Will soothe and calm all those within the walls
Of castles rich, house of honest toiler.
So my love like glistening shafts of sunbeams
Will reach out to you, and enter your heart,
And you will answer with love's own rapture.

NANTUCKET ISLAND

AT TWILIGHT

Pale stars twinkle out of a dome of blue;
The fast fleeting colors of the West
Glow fainter in their rainbow hue
And fill my soul with love's unrest.
Unlike colors of fading day
My love gleams forth in purest gold—
A love that never fades with day,
A love that lives thro' ages old.

CONSTANCY

My love will never go astray,
Will never go far from thee;
Like the stars above and moonbeams bright,
Like the rainbow's hue of colored light,
This love's a glory beam from me.

THE RAY

What matter if wind and sea make moan?
There will come a day when the sad, lone sound
Will have lessened — Will have gone away.
The sun will shine and the waves will lap
The seashore where the sands lie broad with gold;
The clouds will lighten as by magic wand,
And the soft wind will chime its song of glee.
There's never a cloud but will lighter glow
If only we'll wait for the sun's bright ray.

A DANDELION CLOCK

I saw a little fluffy thing
A-sailing through the air,
It looked just like a fairy's dress
As it went fluttering there;
It danced on high, then floated low,
So graceful, airy, light.
I tried to catch it but it went
Way off — right out of sight.

LITTLE SONGSTERS

I saw the singers all in a row
High up on a telephone wire;
They looked so saucy, so spry and pert
Seeming to say, "Won't you come up higher —
Come quickly and enjoy the view —
The wonderful, beautiful view of blue;
The leafy trees and ocean too —
We are the merriest, happiest three,
For dear little, sweet little robins are we."

OCTOBER

October — dusky, rosy maid
Comes tripping down the hill.
She paints the leaves and grasses red,
By forest and then by rill.

Beneath her feet the grasses blush,
From browns way up to red;
While all the leaves near bank and stream
Dry — rustle overhead.

October's crown is on her brow —
Grapes of purple and gourds of gold —
While from her hair peep forth the leaves
Of sumac, deep and bold.

Her cheek is fanned by zephyrs sweet
That ripple soft the brook.
At her approach the acorn falls —
Shy happy at her look.

The sky coquette flirts with the breeze;
While clouds of dusky white
Catch up her laugh, so soft and clear,
To waft the realms of light.

OCTOBER

ONE WORD OF MINE

If one word of mine may lighten a load,
 Make a day of sadness brighter;
If my handclasp heartens the soul of one,
 Makes a victor when day is done;
It will lighten my heart and courage to give
 To the soul of me, strength to live.
For we all are here each other to aid;
 Always in Heaven the debt is paid.

THE WRECK IN THE STORM

'Tis autumn — and the leaves are brown and sere,
And everything around is desolate, cold and drear.
The sky is of a leaden hue — the winds go howling by,
As if in anger; and the leaves are whirling in the sky.
The ocean — in sympathy with land and angry winds,
Dashes now low, now high — 'gainst the wave-washed
beaten sands.

But look! far out upon the sea — is a sight that makes
the cheek,

Of even the boldest on the land pale with unspeakable
fear:

For against the sky is outlined a ship, with sails all gone;
With its freight of human beings —
Watching, praying, for the dawn.

Alas! for the cruel treacherous sea — must we see
them perish?

No — a youth steps forth — who will risk his life,
for those whose souls they cherish.

A life-boat now is quickly launched amid the breakers'
din,

By many a brave and stalwart youth — urged by
the voice of him —

Who risking all — dares venture on the wild tempest-
uous sea.

The boat darts forward — then back, tossed hither and
thither by the free and daring ocean;

Till tired at length with its cruel fun.—

Sweeps the boat near and nearer and the valor of youth
has won.

One by one, is the precious freight taken into the life-boat.
Saved! Saved from a doom alas! how fearful!

Blessings on the brave!

SUNSHINE IN LIFE

The sky is dark — the black clouds lower,
While the wind and the sea make moan;
As the waves dash high and the sea-gull screams
On the wild shore, bleak and lone.

A golden ray from the cloud's darkening breast
Shoots out with its arrow of light;
It turns the cloud into a gold-lined mass,
Madly kisses the wild wave white.

The deep shore-sands glisten along the tide,
The gull's silver wing flashes near;
The tossing caps glisten diamond-like,
And the wind sings joyously clear.

The sunshine in life turns all black clouds,
And the sorrows and ills of earth,
Into blessings of light and joy and love
And gilds them with priceless worth.

AUTUMN

In gazing at the leafless trees
All bare against the sky
One wonders if they felt the cold —
 Even as you or I.
Their arms so gaunt reached out in vain
As if imploring aid.
It seemed to one that all warmth fled
 From branches bleak, afraid —
And then one thought — no care had they —
No fear of storm or cold —
For One there lives who holds all dear —
 The Father, as of old.

HEART-GLOW

My heart is filled with sunshine bright
That flickers all around.
The air is fraught with gladdening peace
Of health and mirthful sound.

The little birds trill out their songs —
The flowers lift high their heads
To catch the golden radiance
Which all around them sheds.

The leaves dance high in playful breeze;
The brooklet laughs joyfully
Whose ripples are tipped with glad some light,
While the sea sings a song to me.

Sweet Nature smiles on all around —
Earth, Sea and Sky and all!
No child of hers should frown or sigh
As bountiful blessings fall.

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SPRINGTIME — BLISSTIME

Oh — give me the greening, the budding of trees —
And the soft fleecy clouds and birds on the wings;
Then Nature is new with its blithesome caress,
For Spring lifts the soul as it blesses and sings.

The sun gilds the hills and the mountains once drear,
The grass upspringing with life that is new,
Flowers shyly peeping as if fearful of cold
Lest blasts left from winter might prove none too few.

It gives one the thrill that it's good to be living
And to attune one's own self with Nature's fair way,
It's health and it's joy — it's soul lifting freedom —
The Springtime — the blisstime of Nature's new day.

ROAD TO THE SEA

It's on to the road that leads to the sea,
Where waves sparkle bright in the sun's glowing ray —
Where the boat sails glimmer as they dart to and fro
Like fairies of light flitting far o'er the bay.

There is freedom from care, burdens fall from the heart
When breezes from Heaven blow cheerfully on.
Then here's to the health and the spirit of fun
When there's laughter and singing right from the start.

There's the voice of the wind as it wafts us along —
The swift breeze that scatters the cares of the day —
So let us be joyful, and jolly and free,
And banish all trouble, and ever be gay.

JUNE

Clouds of flecked-white sailing;
Pastures, green and gold;
Turf of velvet softness —
Buttercups so bold.
Trees with branches waving
O'er the brooks moist way,
Where kine wade deep and lazy
At the noontide day.
Twilight long and glowing
Lingers in the West.
Pale white stars are showing
Stars of peace and rest.

SEASIDE TIME

Sunny skies and balmy air;
Glistening blue waves everywhere;
Shouts of merry childish joy —
Hearts of light — no care to cloy.
It's seaside time,
At old Nantucket.

Scream of birds in passage swift,
Streams of sunshine o'er them drift.
Air is full of salt sea-scent;
Over all a charm is lent.
It's seaside time,
At dear Nantucket.

Sailing, bathing, driving, playing
By the sea where boats are swaying;
By the rippling, restless waters,
Many sons and many daughters
Love old Nantucket.

THAT'S NANTUCKET

Take just a little bit of sand,
And an ocean full of sea;
And heaps of health, and piles of joy,
And winds blowing cool and free,
And that's Nantucket.

White-winged boats on a deep blue sea,
With shafts of the sun's deep glow;
All unrest where the surf beats loud
With a tireless swirl, and slow,
Where screech of bird is ever heard
As he circles in flight on high,
O'er marshy pools, o'er brown-green moors —
Silvery gull with startling cry,
And that's Nantucket.

Shore birds piping along the sand,
Land birds of myriad kinds,
All lend charm to a salt sea clime,
Heaven-breathed by an ocean wind.
From Madaket to Great Point shore
There's health, and peace and rest;
The booming surf, or inland calm
Soothes, whether from East or West,
On blest Nantucket.

The old gray mill on greening hill,
And the cobbles on the square
Hold the charm of age, with memories dear,
To be found not everywhere.
The glow of the beacons along lone coasts
Send out their message of life;
While sea-gray mists steal gently in
From waves of calm or strife,
Around Nantucket.

ON THE DESERT

An arid plain of stillness
Nothing passing by —
Except white clouds above one
In a clear blue sky.
No sound of bird or insect —
Silence, soft and shy.
When out of the deep hushed stillness
A train went rushing by.
It made the air just quiver
With roar and clang of joy —
It changed the lonely prairie
Into a laughing boy.

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